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State of Louisiana
Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and
Emergency Preparedness

KEVIN DAVIS
DIRECTOR

February 20, 2015

Mr. Ron Curry
Regional Administrator (6-RA)
EPA Region VI
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Dear Mr. Curry,

As you are aware, in November 2014, two non-human primates in the breeding colony at the Tulane National Primate Research center (TNPRC) became ill and one died. Pathology samples were submitted to the CDC which identified *Burkholderia pseudomallei* (BP) as the causative agent. This strain of bacteria is not endemic in the US but was the subject of research at TNPRC. Because BP is a tier 1 agent and the material was considered not in containment, the CDC and USDA conducted a joint investigation of TNPRC on January 20-24, 2015.

Since the January 2015 investigation, four monkeys have been tested positive with burkholderia pseudomallei. A second primate was euthanized on February 19, 2015 due to infection with burkholderia pseudomallei. One of the federal investigators has fallen ill and has tested positive with possible recent exposure to the BP strain. Human serology has expanded to the investigative tour group and TPNRC staff. Safety protocols have been enhanced for all those participating in the investigation proceedings. A second investigation was conducted on February 9 – 12, 2015 with the intent of conducting more in-depth review of TNPRC processes to determine route of transmission.

As the investigation continues on the TNPRC compound regarding route of exposure, it is also pressing to answer questions regarding whether the organism has escaped the compound and whether livestock and domestic animals are at risk.

It is come to our attention, that EPA requires a letter to ask for their active participation in this investigative process. To this end, Louisiana is formally requesting EPA's assistance with the following:

1. **Active Engagement:** EPA is requested to provide strategic direction, technical guidance, and/or solicit guidance from appropriate agencies and sections within CDC or other members of the federal family with regards to environmental testing – air, water, soil sampling. Outcomes would determine subsequent steps in remediation of TNPRC and the breeding colony site.
2. **Mitigation/Remediation Plans:** We are requesting EPA provide direct assistance and active engagement in the development of the following mitigation/remediation plans. The intent of these plans is to reduce – if not eliminate – the risk of BP outside the TNPRC compound and to indicate remediation steps if BP infection is indicated.
 - *Surrounding Environmental Testing Plan and Sampling* – to include environmental sampling and evaluation in the surrounding surveillance zone to include air, water, and soil testing and to indicate remediation if BP infection is indicated.
 - *Affected Environmental Remediation in high-risk area*—to perform soil remediation in area(s) identified as high-risk as soon as possible to prevent further transmission/transference
 - *Longterm Monitoring and Surveillance Plan and Sampling* – to perform risk assessment within a meaningful vicinity of the area; to indicate longterm monitoring, surveillance, and on-going lab testing for soil and water sampling.

We understand that this remains an evolving event. Planning and response are essential to our joint responsibility to protect the health and safety of our citizens. We look forward to the immediate identification of a federal lead, and timely action plan so that we can be more effective in the consequence management activities for this unfolding event.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (225) 925-7345 or by email at Kevin.Davis@la.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin Davis".

Kevin Davis